THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, 26th July 1952.

The House met in the Assembly Chamber, Government Estate, Mount Road, Madras, at half past ten of the clock, Mr. Speaker (THE HON. SRI J. SIVASHANMUGAM PILLAI) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

MR. SPEAKER :—" To-day I have placed before the House 27 questions. They include questions which were left over from the list of questions for yesterday and the day before yesterday. I hope, with the co-operation of the House, I shall be able to finish them in one hour."

Minimum wages of Municipal employees.

* 186 Q.—SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state on what grounds Government issued the G.O. No. 1355, Development, dated 29th March 1952, fixing the minimum wage of municipal employees at Rs. 25 per month including allowance?"

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" The scales of pay in local bodies vary widely. The intention in fixing the wages as in the Government Order is that no employee including those in the category of menials and inferior servants should be paid less than the minimum wages fixed. In many cases, this represents an improvement on the salaries previously paid. In some other cases higher salaries are paid, and can be paid consistently with the finances of the local body concerned."

SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" May I know, Sir, out of this Rs. 25, what is the basic salary and the allowance of a municipal worker? Have the Minimum Wages Enquiry Committee made any recommendation regarding the fixation of minimum wages, and if so, have the Government accepted that recommendation?"

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" Rs. 25 includes basic wage, dearness allowance and cash value of concessions. As to the actual proportion, I should like to have notice. As regards the latter part of the question, I can only say this. When the Minimum Wages Enquiry Committee toured the districts, the Chairmen of Municipalities suggested that if the municipalities could not pay, the balance should be met by the Government. As the hon. Member is aware, due to financial stringency, that recommendation cannot be given effect to."

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SRI PILLALAMARRI VENKATESWARLU :—" Is it not a fact that the Minimum Wages Enquiry Committee recommended Rs. 40 as the minimum wage? May I know from the Hon. Minister in how many places labourers have been benefited on account of the fixation of the minimum wage? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" It is a fact that the Committee recommended Rs. 40. As to the number of places in which labourers have been benefited, I should like to have notice."

SRI P. VENKATASUBBAYYA :—" May I know whether the Government have taken into account the high cost of living prevailing then while fixing the minimum wage of municipal employees? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" We not only took into consideration the high cost of living but also the capacity of the Local Boards to pay."

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" Does this fixation fit in with the minimum standard of living ratio stipulated by the Government? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I am unable to answer that question. But I can say, that many, many labourers employed by panchayats and municipalities will be benefited."

SRI M. VEERABHADRAM :—" Will the Government be pleased to place a copy of the Report submitted by that Committee on the table of this House? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I think the Report has already been published. Otherwise, I shall consider the suggestion of the hon. Member."

SRI T. NAGI REDDI :—" In view of the fact that the municipal employees do the dirtiest job on this earth and as they are paid low they are not able to purchase the necessaries of life to enable them to live under good sanitary conditions, will the Government consider the desirability of either supplying them with the necessaries of life or increasing their salary, as Rs. 25 is too low a wage? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" All the employees of the municipalities do not do the dirty work. Only some of them do it, and all the members of the family do it. If you add all their income, the aggregate income of the family, I am afraid, would be far greater than what a graduate can earn."

SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—" Are the Government aware that where local boards and municipalities were willing to pay more, the Government did not sanction the increase? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" Wherever local bodies are paying more than the minimum wages, we are not cutting them down."

Representations from the handloom weavers of Malabar.

* 190 Q.—SRI R. KRISHNAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have received any memoranda or telegrams from Pudukkod village, in Palghat taluk, Malabar, regarding the unemployment and starvation of handloom weavers; and

(b) if so, what action the Government propose to take to ameliorate the condition of these weavers?

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" A representation on the plight of weavers in Malabar was received by Government from the Secretary, Handloom Weavers' Association, Pudukkod, and it was forwarded to the Collector of Malabar for taking necessary action.

" (b) The Government have sanctioned a scheme for relief of distress among weavers through the agency of co-operative societies and it is being introduced in Malabar district also and the weavers in Pudukkod village are also likely to be benefited by the scheme."

SRI R. KRISHNAN :—" In view of the fact that the scheme is not a suitable one and as it will not be of any help to the majority of handloom weavers in the Pudukkod village, will the Government consider an alternative scheme for this purpose? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I have referred to this matter in the House, a number of times. The Government sent two Deputy Registrars to work out the new scheme. I can also tell this House that a satisfactory method of working the scheme has been reported. I have no details but as soon as I get the scheme, I shall place it before this House."

SRI C. V. K. RAO :—" With regard to the serious problems facing the handloom weavers, the Hon. the Chief Minister is reported to be in communication with the Central Government. May I know at what stage it is now, and the issues that he has taken up with them?"

MR. SPEAKER :—" The present question is about the handloom weavers in Malabar. So the hon. Member may give notice of a fresh question."

SRI O. KORAN :—" Will the Government be pleased to state the total number of handloom weavers and their dependants who have already left their homes in search of employment? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I should like to have notice."